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Research has shown that stress is related to negative physical and psychological changes among adults. Compared to the large body of literature on stress among adults, research on the effects of life stress among children and adolescents is relatively sparse. There is evidence, however, that stressful life events are related to problems among children and adolescents. Such problems include poor health, psychological distress, depression, suicide, and delinquent behavior. Research also has revealed several factors that moderate stress in children and adolescents. These factors include high self-esteem, an internal locus of control orientation, and social support from family and friends.
Five scales measuring locus of control orientation, social support, level of psychosocial development, self-esteem, life events, and delinquent behavior were given to thirty early adolescents from divorced homes and thirty-four adolescents from intact homes.

Results of regression analysis, using a general linear model, indicated that early adolescents from divorced homes had lower levels of self-esteem than children from intact homes. There were no significant differences between children from divorced and intact families in levels of delinquent behavior, locus of control, or psychosocial development as reflected in levels of autonomy, intimacy, and identity. Multiple regression analysis revealed that social support in the form of close friend support had a significant moderating effect on the delinquent behavior of early adolescents experiencing parental divorce. Levels of parental, teacher, and classmate support, as well as self-esteem and locus of control orientation, did not show any moderating effects on delinquent behavior.

This study indicates that the impact of parental divorce on early adolescents is influenced by many factors. This study lends support to the need to investigate the effects of divorce on children and
adolescents in terms of the coping resources available to the child.
The Impact of Parental Divorce on Delinquent Behavior and Psychosocial Development in Early Adolescents: The Moderating Effects of Social Support, Self-Esteem, and Locus of Control

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This thesis investigates the impact of divorce on adolescents and factors that moderate the impact of this stressor. Numerous studies have shown that stress is related to negative physical and psychological changes among adults (Folkman, Lazarus, Gruen, & Delongis, 1986; Kobasa, 1982; Parkes, 1984). In comparison to the large body of literature on the negative effects of stress among adults, research on the effects of life stress among adolescents is sparse (Cohen, Burt, & Bjorck, 1987). There is some evidence, however, that stressful life events are related to problems among adolescents, including poor health, abdominal pain, cancer, psychological distress, depression, suicide, and runaway behavior (Williams & Uchiyama, 1989). Research also has revealed several moderators of stress in early adolescence. These include high self-esteem, an internal locus of control
orientation, and social support from family and friends (Compas, 1987; Hetherington, 1984; Rutter, 1983).

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the impact of a major stressor that occurs in the lives of many adolescents, divorce, and to examine factors that may buffer adolescents from the negative effects of divorce. The subjects are in pre- and early adolescence. This age range is an important time of life to examine for two reasons. First, the physical, emotional, and cognitive changes that occur during early adolescence, as well as the changes in the adolescent's social environment, provide a complex arena for the occurrence of stressful events (Peterson & Spiga, 1982). Secondly, the developmental tasks of intimacy, identity, and autonomy also begin in early adolescence. Successful completion of these tasks, critical to adolescent development, depends on support and security from the family, something the early adolescent may be less likely to receive if the family has been disrupted by parental divorce.

Based on the fact that early adolescence is a time of particular vulnerability to familial stress, this thesis will focus on comparing early adolescents from divorced families with early adolescents from
intact families. The first part of the thesis will look at the impact of divorce on behavioral acting out and the factors that may moderate this impact. The second part of the thesis will concentrate on the effects of parental divorce on the successful completion of the adolescent developmental tasks of intimacy, identity, and autonomy.
Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

2.1 STRESS AND ADOLESCENTS

2.1.1 Types of Stress in Adolescence

Stressful life events are often categorized as being normative and non-normative (Hetherington, 1984; Pearlin & Lieberman, 1979). Normative stress in adolescence involves stressors that are predictable in virtually every young person's life. Examples include the biological changes that occur at puberty, changes in peer groups, cognitive changes, and, finally, school transitions. Non-normative stressors include events that happen less frequently, such as sudden death or divorce. Non-normative events can be predictable, such as the divorce of two people after a long separation, or unpredictable, such as the sudden death of a loved one. While there is some evidence that preparation or forewarning of non-normative events may be helpful in coping with the stress of these events, non-normative events are still considered to be much more inherently stressful than normative events (Pearlin & Lieberman, 1979).

Measures of life events are increasingly being used to study stress in adolescence
(Williams & Uchiyama, 1989). Two reasons for using life events have been proposed. The first is that adolescence is a period of many changes, and change has been viewed as an inherent component of stress (Compas, Davis, & Forsythe, 1985; Cohen et al., 1987). Transitions are one form of change that have been found to be a major source of stress during adolescence (Compas et al., 1985). The adolescent's life is full of transitions, such as the transition from elementary school to middle school, or the transition of living with one's parents to living independently. Secondly, adolescence is an important time to study life events stress because of the increasing independence of this age group (Swearingen & Cohen, 1985). With independence comes the ability to take control and responsibility over life events. The adolescent is no longer a passive bystander, but is able to seek out, and attend to events arising in life.

2.1.2 Moderators of Adolescent Stress

It has been suggested that adolescents do not necessarily respond to stress in the same manner as adults (Greene, 1988). While adolescents may agree with adults on the perception that a certain event is
stressful, the impact of the stressor may be different for adolescents. Thus, the death of a family pet may be viewed as stressful by both the parent and the child, but the level of stress created may be far greater for the child than the adult. Research on the impact of stress among adolescents has been consistent with the adult literature, however, in showing that there is great variability in the impact of stress on the lives of adolescents (e.g. Hetherington, 1984). More and more attention is being paid to understanding why some individuals are negatively affected by a stressful situation, while others remain relatively unaffected by the same situation (Burt, Cohen, & Bjorck, 1988; Compas, 1987; Rowlinson, & Felner, 1988; Swearingen & Cohen, 1985).

Coping resources that moderate the negative effects of stress fall into two categories, personal resources and environmental resources (Compas, 1987; Hetherington, 1984; Rutter, 1983). Personal resources include high self-esteem, internal locus of control, and the ability to have a positive outlook toward stressful life events (Averill, 1973; Compas, 1987; Kobasa, 1982; Parkes, 1984; Rutter, 1987). Environmental resources are those resources external to the individual. One important environmental
resource is the availability of social support. It has been shown that the availability of social resources may help to determine whether positive or negative effects will occur as a result of a particular stressor (Compas, 1987; Ganellin & Blaney, 1984; Hetherington, 1984; Rutter, 1983).

Despite the obvious differences between personal and environmental resources, it appears that each may depend on the other. For instance, Hetherington (1984) states that one important role of the peer group, an environmental resource, is to help validate self-worth and personal control. Additionally, Rutter (1983) states that peer and adult relationships contribute to the self-esteem and self-worth of an individual. This ability to develop good personal relationships is important in buffering the negative effects of stressful events, and the absence of such relationships may actually increase the adverse effects of stress (Rutter, 1983).

It appears, then, that the factors that moderate the effects of stressful life events cluster around the way one interprets the stressful event, and the personal and environmental resources one has to deal with the situation. Although these areas have been studied independently of one another, it is clear that
they are interconnected in a very complex manner. The presence of one factor may affect the presence of another. For example, the presence of a supportive parent may help to build one's self-esteem which, in turn, may help one to perceive events as less stressful. Exactly what the connections are between these proposed moderators remains to be determined, but it has been suggested that understanding individual differences in the response to stress is the next important step in research on stress and coping (Compas, Slavin, Wagner, & Vanatta, 1986).

Several researchers have outlined other factors that may also play an important role in the impact of stress on adolescents. One such factor is the timing of different developmental changes. One very important aspect of timing is the onset of puberty (Peterson & Spiga, 1982). For boys the earlier pubertal changes begin the better while, for girls, early physical changes may cause a great deal of stress (Simmons, Blythe, Van Cleave, & Bush, 1979). In addition, Coleman (1978) determined that concurrent timing of developmental changes is more detrimental than sequential timing. So the adolescent who enters puberty, changes schools, and starts dating all at the same time will probably be more at risk for the
negative effects of stress than the adolescent who encounters these normative events sequentially.

It has also been suggested that gender plays an important role in the impact of stress. Pre-adolescent boys in general appear to be more susceptible to the negative effects of stressful life events (Hetherington, 1984). Rutter (1987) also found that boys were impacted more negatively than girls by parental discord.

As stated earlier, non-normative life events are inherently more stressful than normative events (Pearlin & Lieberman, 1979). One non-normative and potentially very stressful event that many adolescents will face is the divorce of their parents. The next section discusses the effects of divorce on adolescents and the role the moderators identified above may play in easing the negative impact of this stressful life event.

2.2 ADOLESCENTS AND DIVORCE

Research has documented that there is great variability in the impact of divorce on children (Demo & Acock, 1988; Hetherington, 1979; Lebowitz, 1985; Sorosky, 1977; Slater, Stewart, & Linn, 1983; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). For some children divorce may not be a detrimental experience, while for others
the effects of parental divorce are devastating (Slater et al., 1983). Still other children appear to come through a divorce apparently unaffected only to develop severe emotional problems later in life (Sorosky, 1977). Although it is difficult to conclude that later problems are directly related to divorce, Wallerstein and Blakeslee (1989) found the presence of a sleeper effect, that is, a delayed reaction to the divorce. This effect was pervasive, and found mostly in females.

Because of the important developmental changes occurring at this point in their lives, adolescents are at a particularly unique risk for problematic reactions to parental divorce. Adolescents are at a stage in their lives when they need the security of their family as they prepare to move out on their own. Divorce may reduce this security, leaving the adolescent vulnerable (Lebowitz, 1985; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). Despite knowledge that adolescents may be at great risk, research on the effects of divorce on adolescents remains sparse (Demo & Acoek, 1988).

Existing research suggests that specific adolescent reactions to divorce include intense anger, sadness, shame, and embarrassment (Lebowitz, 1985; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). Younger adolescents may
experience guilt and feel personally responsible for the divorce. Older adolescents are less likely to feel guilty or responsible, but they are often burdened by a concern for their parent's well being (Sorosky, 1977). A sense of great loss, anxiety, and somatic problems are also common reactions of adolescents to the divorce of their parents (Hetherington, 1979; Lebowitz, 1985; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980).

Reactions to parental divorce may manifest themselves in the behavior patterns of adolescents, and, here again, great variability is evident. Changes in school performance, peer relations, eating patterns, moods, aggressiveness, and sexuality may occur (Lebowitz, 1985; Sorosky, 1977). Some adolescents help to alleviate the pain by pouring themselves into their school work, others show a marked decrease in school performance. Some adolescents show accelerated development, while others seem to get stuck (Lebowitz, 1985). The conclusion is that divorce creates reactions in children that vary in type, intensity, and manifestation.

Behavioral acting out, including delinquent behavior, has also been identified as a reaction to parental divorce (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) found delinquent
behavior, including stealing, arson, and drug involvement in their five-year follow-up study of early adolescents. The authors attribute delinquent behavior to an expression of the intense anger some children displayed following the divorce of their parents. The children who were initially angry after the divorce appeared to show even more intense anger as they entered adolescence during the five year follow-up. In addition to anger, delinquent behavior could also be a result of an increased vulnerability to stress, and an inability to cope adequately with stress following parental divorce. Similarly, Irion, Coon, and Blanchards-Fields (1988) found that adolescents from divorced homes were more likely to employ less mature and maladaptive coping strategies in handling stress.

2.2.1 Divorce and Coping Resources

Because of the importance of resources in buffering stress, it is vital to consider how these resources are affected by divorce. The relationship between divorce and the resources available to the adolescent will be addressed as well as the role that resources play in buffering children from the negative impact of divorce.
2.2.1.1 Self-Esteem

Research on the effects of divorce on self-esteem has revealed that it may be the amount of marital conflict, rather than divorce per se, that has a detrimental effect on children's self-esteem (Long, 1986; Hetherington, 1979). Bishop and Ingersoll (1989) found that self concepts for both girls and boys were highest in low conflict families. Long (1986) arrived at a similar conclusion; that it is the amount of conflict, not family structure, that is important in affecting the self-esteem of children. This has led to the idea proposed by some researchers that children are better off in divorced homes than in conflict ridden homes. Even so, children are rarely relieved by the divorce of their parents, even though family life may improve (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980).

2.2.1.2 Locus Of Control Orientation

Averill (1973) distinguished three main types of control: behavioral, cognitive, and decisional. Behavioral control is the direct action one takes during a stressful time, cognitive is how one interprets the stressful event, and decisional refers to having a choice among different courses of action.
These three forms of control are distinctive, but also intertwined. Averill (1973) stated that the stress reducing properties of personal control depend on the meaning the individual attaches to the control response.

Control also has been defined as internal and external (Rotter, 1966). Internal control refers to the feeling that control over a stressful event lies within one's self. External control refers to the idea that control over adverse conditions lies beyond one's ability to change these conditions. The relationship between internal-external locus of control orientation and the effects of stress has been explored extensively in the research on stress and coping (e.g. Averill, 1973; Cole & Sapp, 1988; Kobasa, 1979). Control has been shown to be most beneficial when it is internal; that is when the person feels he or she has the ability to change the effects of the event. Another important dimension of locus of control orientation is stability. Stability refers to how stable or enduring the stressor is perceived, as determined by a person's locus of control orientation. Thus, the person with an internal locus of control who views the divorce as an unstable, rather than enduring, characteristic of his or her life likely
experience a lesser amount of stress associated with the divorce (Hull, VanTreuren, & Propsom, 1988).

It has been proposed that certain personalities possess a greater sense of control over stressful events (Kobasa, 1979). There is evidence that children with an internal locus of control adjust more easily to divorce (Demo & Acock, 1988). Thus, it is important for investigators to explore the perception of control these children have, and its role in moderating their reaction to the divorce.

2.2.1.3 Social Support

One of the most complex and intriguing moderators of stress is social support (Brownell & Shumaker, 1984). This moderator is especially salient when studying adolescents because of the importance of the peer group during this time. Adolescence is a time when autonomy is developing, and thus the adolescent may withdraw from the support of the family around some issues, and rely more on support from friends and significant others (Hetherington, 1979).

Despite findings on adult stress indicating a strong buffering effect of social support, the role of social support in adaptation to stressful events during adolescence remains relatively uninvestigated.
Compas et al. (1986) found that satisfaction with perceived social support, rather than the amount of support per se, had the most positive effect on the stress created by stressful life events. Peer relations become an increasingly important form of social support as the child moves into adolescence. Even the presence of a single friend can serve as an important source of social support (Hetherington, 1989). In addition, the presence of a supportive teacher, counselor, or other adult can provide relief from the stressful impact of divorce. Hetherington (1989) stated that the most important background characteristic of children who adjust well is the presence of a single caring adult, be it family member, teacher, or friend.

Children from divorced families may suffer deficits in their ability to relate effectively on an interpersonal level (Stolberg & Anker, 1983). Children's adjustment to divorce is facilitated by the chance to discuss their feelings with others (Demo & Acock, 1988; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). It is apparent that social support plays an important role in buffering the negative effects of divorce for children. The intensity of the impact of divorce, however, may affect some children's ability to
successfully obtain this support. Thus, children who most need support may sometimes be the least likely to attain it. Research on the amount and satisfaction of social support available to the adolescent experiencing parental divorce becomes a very important research issue.

One goal of researching the impact of divorce on adolescents is to try to understand the ways in which adolescents cope successfully with the stress the divorce creates. A common measure of successful coping is level of adjustment. Poor adjustment to divorce is often reflected in lower school performance, lower levels of emotional adjustment, greater acting out problems, and an increase in delinquent behaviors (Lebowitz, 1985; Sorosky, 1977). One can conclude from these findings that divorce is an event that may put children and adolescents at risk for poor adjustment. As determined earlier, however, not every child is negatively affected. We have seen how available resources may dramatically help an adolescent cope with stress related to the divorce which, in turn, may lead to a greater level of adjustment. Based on this idea the following hypotheses are proposed.
Hypothesis One:

Children from divorced families will show greater levels of delinquent behavior, lower levels of self-esteem, and a more external locus of control orientation than children from intact families.

Hypothesis Two:

Children in both intact and divorced families with high levels of personal and environmental resources will not differ in levels of delinquent behavior. However, children from divorced families with low levels of resources will show significantly greater levels of delinquency than children from intact families with low levels of resources.

2.3 PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND DIVORCE

An important area to consider when investigating stress in adolescence is the impact of that stress on the developmental tasks that adolescents encounter. Erikson (1968) proposed a set of developmental tasks important to healthy psychological development, among which are the tasks of intimacy, identity, and autonomy. Intimacy refers to the ability of the adolescent to develop and maintain close interpersonal relationships. Identity is the ability to define one's self as an individual. Autonomy refers to the need to
separate and become independent from one's parents. Many studies have focused on the development of these traits (e.g., Arehart & Smith, 1990; Mellor, 1989; Protinsky, 1988). Characteristics of families that promote healthy task completion have also been considered (Pardeck & Pardeck, 1990). The explicit relationship between divorce and adolescent ego development, however, remains unexplored.

Several studies have revealed that potential disruption of development is related to parental divorce (Hetherington, 1979; Lebowitz, 1985; Sorosky, 1977). There is reason to believe, given the results found by researchers, that divorce may have a substantial impact on the completion of adolescent developmental tasks. For instance, in regard to intimacy, Lebowitz (1985) found that adolescents experiencing parental divorce worried about their own sexuality. Similarly, research has revealed that adolescents from divorced families worry a great deal about their ability to become a suitable marriage partner (Slater et al., 1983; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980).

Identity development may also be affected. As Sorosky (1977) pointed out, adolescent identity development is at least partially carried out by
identification with parents, especially same sex parents. Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) noted that the identities of the children in their studies were often severely shaken. Thus divorce may play an important role in identity disruption in two important ways. First, appropriate role models may not be available, and, secondly, the security that a child needs to claim his or her identity may be lost.

Finally, autonomy development may be affected. As Lebowitz (1985) stated, divorce is particularly hard on adolescents who need the security of the family while testing their autonomy. In an intact family, disengagement by the adolescent occurs normally, if not uneventfully, during adolescence. Children in divorced families are often pressured to grow up too quickly, which could also have a negative effect on the development of autonomy (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). Autonomy may also be especially difficult to obtain if the remaining parent depends emotionally on the adolescent (Slater et al, 1983).

Based on these ideas the following hypothesis is proposed:
Hypothesis Three

Adolescents from divorced families will have lower levels of autonomy, identity, and intimacy than adolescents from intact families.

It is further proposed that the level of stress experienced by the children will be related to the accomplishment of adolescent tasks, thus the final hypothesis:

Hypothesis Four

Children in both intact and divorced families with low levels of stress will not differ in autonomy, identity, and intimacy. However, children from divorced families, with high levels of stress will show significantly less autonomy, intimacy, and identity than highly stressed children from intact families.
3.1 SUBJECTS

Twenty-one female and 11 male subjects age 9 to 14, with a mean age of 11.58 years, whose parents were recently divorced or in the process of divorcing were recruited for this study through a divorce recovery workshop for children. The divorce recovery workshop was an eight week program with a support group format sponsored by a local church. The children filled out the questionnaire for this study the first week and then attended seven subsequent group sessions designed to provide support for the children in the issues surrounding parental divorce. Many of the children had a parent attending a divorce workshop for adults held at the same time in another area of the church. While both the divorce groups for children and adults were sponsored by a church, participants were not necessarily church members.

The comparison group subjects consisted of 23 female and 11 males age 10 to 14, with a mean age of 12.0 years. The subjects were recruited from Sunday school classes at the same church that sponsored the
divorce recovery workshop. Subjects in the comparison group were all from never-divorced homes.

3.2 INSTRUMENTS

3.2.1 The Adolescent Perceived Events Scale

The Adolescent Perceived Events Scale (APES) (Compas, Davis, Forsythe, & Wagner, 1987) was used to measure levels of stress. This scale was chosen for this study because it was constructed from information on life events received directly from early adolescents age 11 to 14. Other adolescent life event surveys have been constructed based on adult perceptions of what is stressful to adolescents. A shortened version of this scale was used to measure levels of stress and can be found in Appendix A. The subjects were asked to indicate whether any of 36 life events occurred during the last six months and also to indicate whether the event was good, bad, or neutral. For example, one event is "I changed schools," another is "I began to date." Two types of test-retest reliabilities were conducted during the construction of the scale. First, the correlation between the number of events reported at two administrations two weeks apart was .85 and, secondly, the test-retest
reliability of specific events was .83 (Compas et al., 1987).

Validity for the APES was assessed by comparing reports of the subject's life events with reports of subject's life events obtained from close friends of the subjects. Concurrent validity was .82 for subjects and close friend reports (Compas et al., 1987).

3.2.2 The Delinquency Lifestyle Scale

The Delinquency Lifestyle Scale was used to measure subject's behavioral patterns. Developed by Ageton and Elliott (1978), this scale measures patterns of delinquent behavior. The thirteen items that make up the scale describe different behaviors indicative of delinquency. Subjects were asked to indicate how many times in the past year they performed each of the behaviors. For example, subjects were asked to indicate how many times in the past year they had run away from home, hit or threatened to hit other students, or cheated on tests (questions two, five, and nine). Scores range from zero (the behavior not performed) to nine. The maximum score given was nine even if the subject indicated that he or she had performed a behavior more than nine times. Thus, the range of scores on this scale was 0 to 117. Test-
retest reliability has been found to be .78 between two administrations 68 days apart (Snyder, Dishion, & Patterson, 1986). The Delinquency Lifestyle Behavior Scale can be reviewed in Appendix B.

3.2.3 Desirable and Undesirable Event Locus of Control Scale

The Desirable and Undesirable Event Locus of Control Scale (DUE-LOC; Rothbaum, Wolfer, & Visitainer, 1978), in Appendix C, was employed to measure a subject's locus of control orientation. Made up of descriptions of eighteen events, the DUE-LOC asks subjects to respond to one of two response alternatives; one indicates that control over the event is attributed to him or her self, and the other indicates that control of the event is attributed to sources outside him or herself. For example, question 7 asks "when you get something wrong is that usually because a: no one showed you how to do it, or b: you were not careful enough. Answer "a" indicates an external locus of control for this event while answer "b" indicates an internal locus of control. Responses that indicate an internal locus of control are scored 1 and responses indicating an external locus of control are scored 0. In this manner locus of control
orientation scores will range from a low of zero to a high of eighteen, with a higher score indicating a greater internal locus of control orientation.

Test-retest reliabilities, with three to six weeks between administrations have been found to range from .72 to .74 (Rothbaum, Wolfer, & Visitainer, 1978).

3.2.4 Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1966) found in Appendix D was used to measure subject's level of self-esteem. This scale consists of ten questions followed by four possible responses; strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. For example question three asks "All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure." Responses are scored from one, indicating lowest self-esteem, to four, indicating highest self-esteem. In this manner self-esteem scores ranged from a low of ten to a high of forty. Test-retest reliability for the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale has been determined to be .85 (Silbert & Tippett, 1965).
3.2.5 The Social Support Scale For Children

The Social Support Scale For Children (Harter, 1986) was used to measure level of social support. This scale, found in Appendix E, consists of twenty-four items subdivided into four subscales of six items each. The four subscales measure the level of social support each subject receives from parents, classmates, teachers, and close friends.

Subjects were first asked to consider which of two descriptions was more like them. For example, one description says "Some kids don't have a close friend who really listens to them," and "other kids do have a close friend who really listens to what they say." Subjects are asked to decide which description best fits them. The second part of the question asks the subject to indicate whether the description they chose is "really true of me" or "sort of true of me." Answers were then scored from one to four, based on the subject's responses. A score of one indicates that the child does not have that form of support, while a score of four indicates that the child frequently has that form of support. In this manner the scores for each subscale range from a low of six (very little, or no support) to a high of twenty-four (a high level of support).
3.2.6 Erikson Psychological Stage Inventory

The Erikson Psychosocial Stage Inventory (Rosenthal, Gurney, & Moore, 1981), found in Appendix F, consists of six 12-item subscales that assess the degree of resolution to six of Erikson's identity crises in childhood and adolescence. The subscales for intimacy, identity, and autonomy from the EPSI were used for this study. Subjects were asked to respond on a five-point scale to descriptions about themselves. For example, question five says "I change my opinion about myself a lot" the subject then responds with "not true at all," "not true," "neutral," "true," or "very true". Scores range from twelve to sixty for each subscale, with high scores indicating positive resolutions to the crisis. Rosenthal et al. (1981) reported alpha coefficients ranging from .57 to .81 for these scales. Mellor (1989) reported alpha coefficients of .72 to .82.

3.3 PROCEDURE

At the first support group meeting packets containing the six testing instruments were distributed. Subjects were instructed to complete the packet carefully during the next week and to bring them to the next group meeting. The same test packets
were handed out to the comparison group subjects during their Sunday school class. The comparison group was asked to fill out the packet and return it the next Sunday.

As an incentive to fill out the packet, subjects were informed that each completed packet would enter them in a drawing for either a walkman or a clock radio. A separate drawing was held for each group.

The following instructions were printed on the first page of the packet:

"The purpose of this project is to find out about the attitudes that young persons your age have about their families, friends, and themselves. In order to do this we would like you to answer some questions since no one can give us information better than you. Before you answer these questions it is very important that you know that your answers will be kept totally private. No one you know (teachers, parents, anyone in the community) will ever see your answers, so please answer honestly. It is also important that you know that you do not have to answer any question that you are not comfortable answering."

"Remember that this is not a test. There are no right or wrong answers, just your answers. Don't spend
too long on any question. Your first reaction to a question is usually the best answer."

"Read the directions before you answer the questions. For all questions give only one answer. Mark only in the spaces provided. Thank-you for your help!"

At the bottom of the sheet was a form where the subjects provided demographic information. The subject was told that this section would be removed from the rest of the packet to ensure his or her privacy. Demographic information collected included name, age, and gender.

3.3 ANALYSIS

Two statistical procedures were used to test the hypotheses. Hypotheses 1 and 3 were analyzed using the Least Square Means procedure, controlling for age of the subject. In both cases the independent variable was divorced versus intact homes. For hypothesis one the dependent variables were level of delinquent behavior, self-esteem, and locus of control. For hypothesis four the dependent variables were levels of autonomy, intimacy, and identity.

Multiple regression analysis was used to analyze hypotheses 2 and 4 since both predict the presence of
a moderator, and thus an interactive effect. Hypothesis 2 looked at the interaction between divorced versus intact homes and level of resources in predicting level of delinquent behavior. It was predicted that the amount of available resources will moderate the effects of divorce on delinquency. Similarly, hypothesis 4 examined the interactions between divorced versus intact homes and level of stress in predicting levels of autonomy, intimacy, and identity.
Chapter 4

Results

4.1 Testing The Hypotheses

4.1.1 Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis one states that children from divorced homes will show greater levels of delinquent behavior, lower levels of self-esteem, and a more external locus of control than children from intact families. This hypothesis was tested using a general linear model procedure that controlled for age. As table one indicates, children from divorced families showed a significantly lower level of self-esteem than children from intact families. Levels of delinquency and locus of control did not differ significantly between the divorced and intact groups.

4.1.2 Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis two states that children in both intact and divorced families with high levels of personal and environmental resources will not differ in levels of delinquent behavior, but that children from divorced families with low levels of coping resources will show significantly greater levels of delinquency than children from intact families with
low levels of coping resources. This hypothesis predicts that personal and environmental resources will serve as moderators of the impact of divorce on delinquency. To analyze this hypothesis, environmental resources were separated into close friend, classmate, teacher, and parental support. Two types of personal resources, self-esteem and locus of control orientation, were examined. Multiple regression was used to assess the effect of the moderators. First, main effects models containing terms for group status (intact versus divorce), the moderator variable, and a control variable for age of the subject were run. Next, the interaction term (the algebraic product of the moderator and group status) was added to the model. As Table two indicates, a significant interaction was found in one type of social support. Children from divorced homes with lower levels of close friend support showed significantly greater levels of delinquency than children from divorced homes with greater levels of this type of support. Figure one illustrates the moderating effect of close friendship on level of delinquent behavior. The moderating effect of classmate support approached significance (p = .1344), and the main effect for classmate support was highly significant (.0071).
While level of parental support did not have a moderating effect on delinquency, a main effect was found \((p = .0493)\). No moderating or main effects were found for teacher support, locus of control, or self-esteem.

4.1.3 Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis three states that children from divorced families will have lower levels of autonomy, identity, and intimacy than children from intact families. A general linear model procedure that controlled for age was used to test this hypothesis. As table three shows, no significant differences were found between children from divorced and intact families.

4.1.4 Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis four predicts that level of stress will serve as a moderator of levels of intimacy, identity, and autonomy. Thus, children in both intact and divorced families with low levels of stress will not differ in autonomy, identity, and intimacy. However, children from divorced families with high levels of stress will show significantly less autonomy, identity, and intimacy than highly stressed children from intact families. As table four indicates, no significant interactions were found,
although the moderating effect on intimacy did approach significance (p = .09). No significant main effects of stress on autonomy, intimacy, or identity were found.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Divorce Group</th>
<th>Intact Group</th>
<th>LSM Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Esteem</td>
<td>22.50</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>23.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delinquent Behavior</td>
<td>7.15</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>4.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locus of Control</td>
<td>24.23</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>24.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE TWO

Multiple Regression Analysis: The Moderating Influences of Social Support, Locus of Control, and Self-Esteem on Delinquent Behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Step One Main Effects</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Step Two Add Interaction</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>beta</td>
<td>Adj.</td>
<td>R²</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>beta</td>
<td>Adj.</td>
<td>R²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close Friend</td>
<td>-.55</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-1.50</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classmate</td>
<td>-.82</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.87</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>-.56</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>-.52</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>-.45</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locus of Control</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Esteem</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>-.57</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FIGURE ONE
The Moderating Effect of Close Friend Support on Level of Delinquent Behavior
TABLE THREE

Least Square Mean Values for Levels of Autonomy, Identity, and Intimacy: Divorce and Intact Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Divorce Group</th>
<th>Intact Group</th>
<th>LSM SIG.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>44.72</td>
<td>44.71</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>43.33</td>
<td>44.85</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimacy</td>
<td>41.11</td>
<td>43.18</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE FOUR

**Multiple Regression Analysis: The Moderating Influence of Stress on Autonomy, Identity, and Intimacy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Step One</th>
<th></th>
<th>Step Two</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Main Effects</td>
<td></td>
<td>Add Interaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>beta</td>
<td>Adj. R²</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>beta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>-.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimacy</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>-.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This thesis had four main objectives. The first was to determine whether levels of delinquent behavior, self-esteem, and locus of control were different in children from divorced and intact families. The second objective was to determine if the resources available to the child experiencing parental divorce would serve as moderators for levels of delinquent behavior. The third goal was to determine if levels of intimacy, identity, and autonomy differed between children from divorced and intact families. The final goal was to determine if the level of stress present in the child's life served as a moderator of the impact of divorce on levels of intimacy, identity, and autonomy.

5.1 COPING RESOURCES AND DIVORCE

Consistent with previous research, children's level of self-esteem was significantly lower for children from divorced homes. It should be noted, however, that this difference, while statistically significant, was very small and thus difficult to interpret in meaning. Predictions that children from
divorced homes would also show a lower internal locus of control and more delinquent behavior were not supported.

There was a significant moderating effect of two forms of social support (classmate and close friend) on levels of delinquent behavior. These findings are interesting findings for two reasons. First, without investigating the presence of a moderator, it would appear that divorce does not affect levels of delinquent behavior. But the results found in this study clearly indicate that although children from divorced homes may not be at an automatic risk for delinquent behavior, children from divorced homes who also have a lack of classmate and close friend support may be at a greater risk for delinquency.

Secondly, this finding is particularly interesting in light of the age of children considered in this study. As pointed out earlier, at this time of life children begin to depend much more on friends as they increase in their independence (Hetherington, 1989). It is interesting, therefore, that the most crucial support appeared to be coming from peers. While level of parental support did not show a moderating effect, the significant main effect should be noted. This indicates that parental support is very
important whether a child is from an intact or divorced family.

5.2 STRESS, PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, AND DIVORCE

Levels of autonomy, intimacy and identity did not differ between divorce and intact groups, nor did level of stress serve as a moderating effect on levels of autonomy, intimacy, and identity. One reason for this finding that should be considered is the relatively young age of this sample. The maximum age was fourteen years. This could be somewhat young for dealing with the developmental tasks of autonomy, intimacy, or identity, and thus the successful resolution of these tasks may not have been affected.

5.3 LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

This study has some important limitations that need to be considered when interpreting the results presented. First, this is a relatively small sample that crosses a five year age span. Despite the fact that the statistical models used in this study controlled for age, the five year span has to be considered given all the changes that are proposed to take place during the time from age 10 to 14. Future
research should explore the questions addressed in this study with a larger sample size of each age.

Secondly, the church setting of this study should be noted. All the comparison group children were involved in a church school program. While many of the children from the divorce group attended the same church, involvement in the church was not systematically assessed. Thus, the extent to which the groups differed in church participation is not known. Whether church school participation is a factor that affects how children cope is the topic for another study. Further research needs to be designed toward the idea that there are important individual differences in the impact of stressful events like divorce. The more that research in this area seeks to identify both protective and risk factors (Rutter, 1987) the better understanding we will have in predicting individual outcomes of stressful events.

5.4 CONCLUSIONS

The results of this thesis lend support to the idea that many factors affect how a child will react to the divorce of his or her parents. This thesis identified the importance of social support, especially in the form of close personal and classmate
support, as serving as moderating factors in the effects of divorce on delinquent behavior. The most convincing aspect of this finding is that if one was to look only at the mean levels of delinquent behavior for the divorced and intact groups there appears to be no difference. A premature conclusion could be that divorce has no effect on levels of delinquency. Therefore, it has become imperative that we consider the wide variety of reactions to parental divorce in terms of the many combinations of factors that may influence these reactions. Through the use of a relatively simple statistical technique, this thesis found important information that may have been overlooked if a simple two group comparison was conducted. The final conclusion of this thesis is that, in order to further our understanding of the impact of parental divorce on children, we must always remember that the impact of divorce will be moderated by many variables. It becomes the job of researchers in this area not only to identify these variables, but also the combinations of factors that will best serve as protective factors for children at risk from the divorce of their parents.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Appendices
APPENDIX A

THE ADOLESCENT PERCEIVED EVENTS SCALE
(APES)
The Adolescent Perceived Events Scale
(Compas, Davis, Forsythe, & Wagner, 1987)

1. A new brother or sister was born in my family
2. I was suspended from school
3. I broke up with my girlfriend/boyfriend
4. I made a new friend
5. I broke up with a close friend
6. A close friend of mine died
7. I received academic honors
8. I began to date
9. I was seriously ill or injured
10. My mother or father was seriously ill or injured
11. I changed schools
12. I began drinking alcohol or taking drugs
13. A new person joined our household
14. I was accepted into an important activity
15. I was not accepted into an important activity
16. My mother or father lost a job
17. My favorite pet died
18. I ran away from home
19. I flunked a grade
20. My brother or sister had serious trouble
21. I started wearing braces or glasses
22. I was assaulted, robbed, or a victim of another crime
23. A family member of mine was a victim of violence
24. I received outstanding personal achievement
25. A close family member of mine died
26. I argue more with my parents
27. I argue less with my parents
28. My family had serious financial troubles
29. My brother or sister left our household
30. Because of a job change or other reason, my father and mother spent much more time away from home
31. My family moved to another house
32. My parents argue much more with each other
33. I became a member of a church or religious group
34. I was arrested or had serious trouble with the law
35. My mother or father was arrested or had serious trouble with the law
36. I had braces removed
APPENDIX B

THE DELINQUENCY LIFESTYLE SCALE
The Delinquency Lifestyle Scale

(Ageton & Elliott, 1978)

How many times in the past year have you....

1. Purposely damaged or destroyed property that did not belong to you? ___times
2. Run away from home? ___times
3. Carried a hidden weapon other than a plain pocket knife? ___times
4. Stolen or tried to steal things worth $5 or less? ___times
5. Hit or threatened to hit other students? ___times
6. Been loud, rowdy, or unruly in a public place so that other people were disturbed? ___times
7. Stolen or tried to steal something worth more than $50? ___times
8. Avoided paying for such things as movies, bus rides, or food (like sneaking into the movie)? ___times
9. Cheated on school tests? ___times
10. Been sent to the office because you did something wrong? ___times
11. Been suspended from school? ___times
12. Skipped school or played hookey? ___times
13. Damaged school property on purpose? ___times
APPENDIX C

THE DESIRABLE AND UNDESIRABLE EVENT LOCUS OF CONTROL SCALE
Desirable and Undesirable Event Locus of Control Scale

(Rothbaum, Wolfer, & Visitainer, 1978)

1. When you get better from a cold, is it usually
   a. because the medicine made you better, or
   b. because you took care of yourself

2. When you beat someone at a game is it usually
   a. because you are good at the game, or
   b. because the other person doesn't play the game well

3. When you catch a cold, it is usually
   a. because you caught it from someone else, or
   b. because you didn't take care of yourself

4. When someone stops spending time with you, it is usually
   a. because you did something the person didn't like, or
   b. because you didn't take care of yourself

5. When you can't understand something, it is usually
   a. because it was too hard to understand, or
   b. because you haven't thought about it enough

6. When someone gives you a surprise, it is usually
   a. because you need it, or
   b. because the person likes to give people surprises

7. When you get something wrong, is that usually
   a. because no one showed you how to do it, or
   b. because you were not careful enough

8. When you are having trouble doing a puzzle, is it usually
   a. because you can't figure out where the pieces go, or
   b. because some of the pieces are missing

9. When you are happy, are you usually happy
   a. because someone was nice to you, or
   b. because you did something you enjoy

10. When you finally get something you wanted, is it usually
    a. because you kept trying for it, or
    b. because things worked out your way

11. When you hurt yourself, is that usually
    a. because you were in an accident, or
    b. because you were not careful

12. When someone tells you they are proud of you, is it usually
    a. because you did something special, or
    b. because the person is feeling good

13. When you get punished, is it usually
    a. because you did something you weren't suppose to do, or
    b. because the person who punished you is in a bad mood
14. When you get the right answer on a difficult problem, is it usually
   a. because someone explained it to you, or
   b. because you tried to do it yourself

15. When you run out of money is it usually
   a. because you didn't have enough to start with, or
   b. because you didn't plan ahead/save enough

16. When you solve a problem is it usually
   a. because it was an easy problem, or
   b. because you did good work on it

17. When someone beats you at a game, is that usually
   a. because you aren't very good at the game, or
   b. because the other person is very good at the game

18. When you say something smart, is it usually
   a. because you thought about it a lot, or
   b. because you heard somebody smart say it
APPENDIX D

THE ROSENBERG SELF-ESTEEM SCALE
Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

(Rosenberg, 1965)

1. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.
   1. __ Strongly Agree  2. __ Agree
   3. __ Disagree  4. __ Strongly Disagree

2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
   1. __ Strongly Agree  2. __ Agree
   3. __ Disagree  4. __ Strongly Disagree

3. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.
   1. __ Strongly Agree  2. __ Agree
   3. __ Disagree  4. __ Strongly Disagree

4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.
   1. __ Strongly Agree  2. __ Agree
   3. __ Disagree  4. __ Strongly Disagree

5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
   1. __ Strongly Agree  2. __ Agree
   3. __ Disagree  4. __ Strongly Disagree

6. I take a positive attitude toward myself.
   1. __ Strongly Agree  2. __ Agree
   3. __ Disagree  4. __ Strongly Disagree

7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
   1. __ Strongly Agree  2. __ Agree
   3. __ Disagree  4. __ Strongly Disagree

8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.
   1. __ Strongly Agree  2. __ Agree
   3. __ Disagree  4. __ Strongly Disagree

9. I certainly feel useless at times.
   1. __ Strongly Agree  2. __ Agree
   3. __ Disagree  4. __ Strongly Disagree

10. At times I think I am no good at all.
    1. __ Strongly Agree  2. __ Agree
    3. __ Disagree  4. __ Strongly Disagree
APPENDIX E

THE HARTER SOCIAL SUPPORT SCALE FOR CHILDREN
## Appendix
### Social Support Scale for Children
(Harter, 1986)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Really True For Me</th>
<th>Sort of True For Me</th>
<th>BUT Other kids like to do fun things with just a few people</th>
<th>Really True For Me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some kids like to do fun things with a lot of other people</td>
<td>BUT Other kids have parents who really do understand them.</td>
<td>Some kids have classmates who wish they were different.</td>
<td>Some kids have parents who don't want to hear about their children's problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some kids have parents who really don't understand them.</td>
<td>BUT Other kids have classmates who like them the way they are.</td>
<td>Some kids have a teacher who helps them if they are upset and have a problem.</td>
<td>Some kids have a close friend who they can tell problems to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some kids have classmates who like them the way they are.</td>
<td>BUT Other kids don't have a teacher who helps them.</td>
<td>Some kids have parents who don't seem to want to hear about their children's problems.</td>
<td>Some kids have parents who do want to listen to their children's problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some kids have a close friend who they can tell problems to.</td>
<td>BUT Other kids have classmates that they can become friends with.</td>
<td>Some kids have classmates that they can become friends with.</td>
<td>Some kids have classmates that they can become friends with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some kids have parents who don't seem to want to hear about their children's problems.</td>
<td>BUT Other kids don't have a teacher who helps them to do their very best.</td>
<td>Some kids don't have a teacher who helps them to do their very best.</td>
<td>Some kids don't have a teacher who helps them to do their very best.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some kids have a close friend who really understands them.</td>
<td>BUT Other kids don't have a close friend who understands them.</td>
<td>Some kids don't have a close friend who understands them.</td>
<td>Some kids don't have a close friend who understands them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some kids have parents who care about their children's feelings. **BUT** Some kids have parents who don't seem to care very much about their children's feelings.

Some kids have classmates who sometimes make fun of them. **BUT** Other kids have classmates who make fun of them.

Some kids do have a teacher who cares about them. **BUT** Other kids don't have a teacher who cares about them.

Some kids have a close friend who they can talk to about things that bother them. **BUT** Other kids don't have a close friend who they can talk to about things that bother them.

Some kids have parents who treat their children like a person who really matters. **BUT** Other kids have parents who don't usually treat their children like a person who matters.

Some kids have classmates who pay attention to what they say. **BUT** Other kids have classmates who usually don't pay attention to what they say.

Some kids don't have a teacher who is fair to them. **BUT** Other kids do have a teacher who is fair to them.

Some kids don't have a close friend who they like to spend time with. **BUT** Other kids do have a close friend who they like to spend time with.

Some kids have parents who wish their children were different. **BUT** Other kids don't get asked to play in games by their classmates very often.

Some kids don't have a teacher who cares if they feel bad. **BUT** Other kids do have a teacher who cares if they feel bad.

Some kids don't have a close friend who really listens to what they say. **BUT** Other kids do have a close friend who really listens to what they say.
Some kids have parents who don't act like what their children do is important.

But other kids have parents who do act like what their children do is important.

Some kids often spend recess being alone.

But other kids spend recess playing with their classmates.
APPENDIX F

THE ERIKSON PSYCHOLOGICAL STAGE INVENTORY
Erikson Psychosocial Stage Inventory

(Rosenthal, Gurney, & Moore, 1981)

1 = not true at all  2 = not true  3 = neutral  4 = true  5 = very true

1. ____ I am able to take things as they come
2. ____ I can't make sense of my life
3. ____ I get embarrassed when someone begins to tell me personal things
4. ____ I can't make up my own mind about things
5. ____ I change my opinions of myself a lot
6. ____ I'm never going to get on in this world
7. ____ I'm ready to get involved with a special person
8. ____ I've got a clear idea of what I want to be
9. ____ I feel mixed up
10. ____ I know when to please myself and when to please others
11. ____ The important things in life are clear to me
12. ____ I've got it together
13. ____ I know what kind of person I am
14. ____ I'm warm and friendly
15. ____ I really believe in myself
16. ____ I can't decide what I want to do with my life
17. ____ It's important to me to be completely open with my friends
18. ____ I keep what I really think and feel to myself
19. ____ I have a strong sense of what it means to be female/male
20. ____ I am ashamed of myself
21. ____ I think it's crazy to get too involved with people
22. ____ I like myself and am proud of what I stand for
23. ____ I don't really know what I'm on about
24. ____ I care deeply for others
25. ____ I find I have to keep up a front when I am with people
26. ____ I don't feel really involved
27. ____ I like to make my own choices
28. ____ I don't feel confident of my judgement
29. ____ I'm basically a loner
30. ____ I have a close physical and emotional relationship with another person
31. ____ I can stand on my own to feet
32. ____ I find it hard to make up my mind
33. ____ I like my freedom and don't want to be tied down
34. ____ I prefer not to show to much of myself to others
35. ____ Being alone with other people makes me feel uncomfortable
36. ____ I find it easy to make close friends